

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the application and claims in light of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-5, 7, 8 and 11-33 are pending in the present application.

Claims 23-33 have previously been withdrawn from consideration.

Claims 6, 9 and 10 were previously cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Claims 1-5, 7, 8 and 11-22 were rejected.

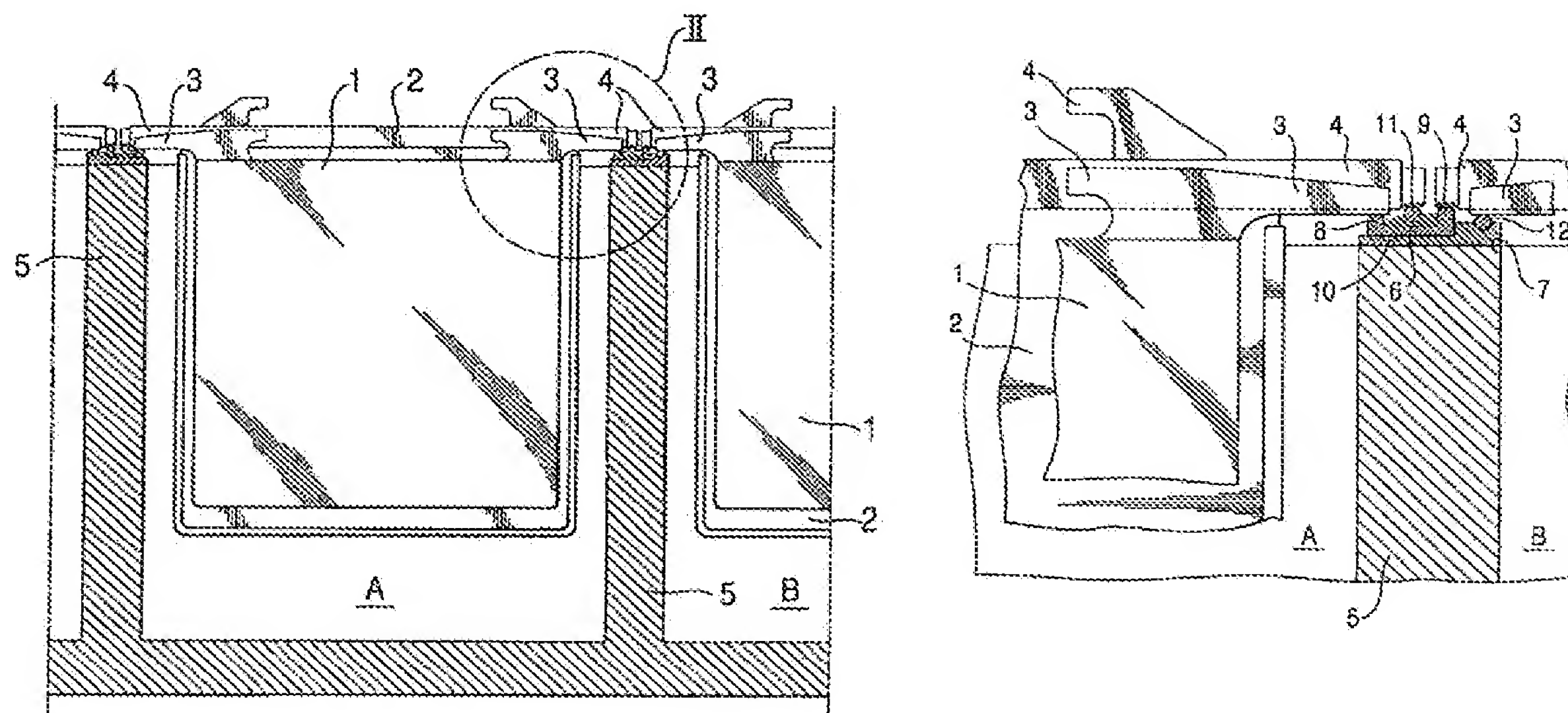
The claims have not been amended herein. The listing of the claims is provided for the Examiner's convenience.

II. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-5 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,679,240 to Anastasijevic et al. ("Anastasijevic") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,342,136 to Virtanen et al. ("Virtanen"). Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Anastasijevic in view of Virtanen, and in further view of U.S. Publication No. 2003/0173214 by Juric et al. ("Juric"). Claims 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Anastasijevic in view of Virtanen, and in further view of German Application No. 199 40 698 to Nikola Anastasijevic et al. ("Nikola"). Claims 13-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Anastasijevic in view of Virtanen, in further view of Nikola, and yet in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,651,024 to Gensini et al. ("Gensini"). Claims 18-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Anastasijevic in view of Virtanen, in further view of Nikola, in further view of Gensini, and yet in further view of U.S. Patent No. 4,098,668 to Anderson et al. ("Anderson"). Claim 22 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Anastasijevic in view of Virtanen, in further view of Nikola, in further view of Gensini, and yet in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,865,967 to Hiai et al. ("Hiai"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 of the present application recites "distributing current between the anode and the cathode by providing a first contact bar and a second contact bar at an edge of the electrolyte tank, each of the contact bars being connected to a power source, the first end of the hanger bar of the cathode resting on the first contact bar via a two-line contact and the first end of the hanger bar of the anode resting on the second contact bar via a two-line contact, the second end of the hanger bar of the cathode resting on a cathode equalizer bar disposed on one of the contact bars and the second end of the hanger bar of the anode resting on an anode equalizer bar disposed on one of the contact bars." It is respectfully submitted that Anastasijevic, Virtanen, Nikola, Juric, Gensini, Anderson and Hiai, alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest the foregoing features of claim 1.

As acknowledged in the Office Action, Anastasijevic fails to disclose or suggest the above-recited features of claim 1. *See Detailed Action, Page 3.* In the Office Action, Virtanen was relied on as teaching these features. *See Detailed Action, Pages 3-4.* It is respectfully submitted, however, that Virtanen, in fact, also fails to disclose or suggest these features. As can be seen from FIGS. 1 and 2 of Virtanen reproduced below, the support lugs 3 of the anode 1 rest at *each* end of cell A on the shorter bulge 8 of main busbar 6 and the support lugs 4 of the cathode 2 rest at *each* end of cell A on support elements 11. In the adjacent cell B, the support lugs 3 of the anode 1 rest at *each* end on the support element 12 and the support lugs 4 of the cathode 2 rest at *each* end on the taller bulge 9 of the main busbar 6. Thus, the support lugs 3, 4 of the anode 1 or cathode 2 of Virtanen rest at *each* end on either a support element 11, 12 or a main busbar 6 and do not rest with a *first* end on a contact bar and with the *second* end on an equalizer bar disposed on a contact bar, as required by claim 1. In other words, even if the support lugs 3, 4 can be interpreted as hanger bars, the main busbar 6 can be interpreted as a contact bar and the support elements 11, 12 can be interpreted as equalizer bars (see Detailed Action, Page 3), then each hanger bar 3, 4 of Virtanen rests at *each* end on a contact bar 6 or on an equalizer bar 11, 12, and not at a *first* end on a contact bar and at a *second* end on an equalizer bar, as required by claim 1.



Virtanen - Figures 1 and 2

Moreover, it is respectfully submitted that Virtanen also fails to disclose that the first end of the hanger bars of the anode and cathode respectively rest on first and second contact bars via a two-line contact, as required by claim 1. In contrast, the support lugs 3, 4 of Virtanen rest with only a single point of contact on the semi-circular or circular profiles of the bulges 8, 9 or support elements 11, 12. See FIGS. 1 and 2 of Virtanen (above). It is respectfully submitted that Virtanen nowhere discloses or suggests that either bulge 8, 9 or either support element 11, 12 forms a two-line contact¹ with a support lug 3, 4 at either end, as required by claim 1.

It is respectfully submitted that each of Nikola, Juric, Gensini, Anderson and Hiai fail to correct the deficiency of Anastasijevic and Virtanen discussed above.

Because each of Anastasijevic, Virtanen, Nikola, Juric, Gensini, Anderson and Hiai fail to disclose or suggest at least the above-recited features of claim 1, any combination of these references, to the extent proper, could not render claim 1 or any of its dependent claims 2-5, 7, 8, and 11-22 obvious. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the respective

¹ For one example of a two-line contact, see FIG. 5 of the present application.

rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on respective combinations of Anastasijevic with Nikola, Juric, Gensini, Anderson and/or Hiai is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing arguments, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

If there are any other issues remaining which the Examiner believes could be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any unpaid fees deemed required in connection with this submission, including any additional filing or application processing fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or 1.17, or to credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 12-1216.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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